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February 17, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. McGeorge Bundy  
Special Assistant to the President

SUBJECT: Apparent conflict in Testimony Regarding Cuba

On October 3, 1962, I appeared before the House Select Committee on Export Control, then chaired by Representative Kitchin. In requesting my appearance the Committee staff had indicated that I should be prepared to give the Committee full information regarding the Soviet arms buildup in Cuba. For the purposes of preparing my statement, I requested Mr. Roger Hilsman, Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State, to obtain the most current and authoritative information and make sure that this information and its disclosure to the Committee were cleared with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Hilsman prepared a statement (TAB C) showing an inventory of Soviet military equipment known to be in Cuba. He has advised me (TAB B) that this data was obtained from the daily editions of the CIA Bulletin which is prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency in consultation with other intelligence agencies and from the Defense Intelligence Summary prepared by the Defense Intelligence Agency. Mr. Hilsman has further advised me that, after preparing this inventory, he telephoned Mr. John McCone on the secure telephone at 12:20 p.m., October 2. He told Mr. McCone that I had been requested to testify regarding the Cuban arms buildup before the Kitchin Committee, and read Mr. McCone the inventory that was to be included in my statement. Mr. McCone checked off each item and

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declassified the material so that I might disclose it to the Committee in open hearings. In addition, he requested that I contrive a question from a Congressman as to the sources of the intelligence information so that I might reply that there were many different sources, of which the many refugee reports were the principal one.

Under Tab A are those excerpts from my statement and testimony which have recently been questioned by the Mann Committee, as noted below. The full transcript of my testimony is contained at Tab B.

You will note from the excerpts that I said, in response to a question, that "our intelligence with respect to Cuba ... is very hard and very good and very comprehensive, as a result of the number of refugees constantly coming out, and other kinds of opportunities that are provided to gain information with regard to the Cuban situation." This was said in an effort to meet Mr. McCone's request for emphasis on the Cuban refugees.

Last week Mr. McCone testified before the Mann Committee. Relevant excerpts from his testimony are enclosed under Tab Z. In the course of his testimony Representative Lipscomb, who had been present when I testified before the Kitchin Committee, noted that a chart shown the Committee by Mr. McCone "did not concur with Mr. Ball's testimony at that time." Mr. Lipscomb said:

"I believe that Secretary Ball at that time was blowing down all of the information that was coming in and substantiating the figures that the Administration was giving out at that time."

Mr. McCone replied:

"Mr. Lipscomb, I am not familiar with Secretary Ball's statements on October 3. I am sure that I am very sincere and represented my best judgment and my best interpretation of the information available to me."

When

When asked by Mr. Lipson as to whether Secretary Hall had been "giving out official information and not his own opinion", Mr. McCone replied: "I know of no inventory of equipment produced during September and October." After discussing the CIA procedures, he then stated:

"We have not produced and I have not seen, although Mr. Hall does have within the State Department, of course, an intelligence organization of his own-- I have not seen an inventory of this type dated the first of October, have you?"

This last question was apparently addressed to Mr. Holmes, one of Mr. McCone's Deputies, who replied: "No, sir, I have not."

Against the background of Mr. McCone's testimony, Mr. McNamara was severely interrogated on February 6 by the Mahon Committee regarding my alleged "under-statements". Relevant excerpts from Secretary McNamara's testimony appear under Tab F. Secretary McNamara made a valiant effort to defend my integrity, but he has reported to me that the atmosphere in the Committee room reflected considerable "personal animus" against me because of the feeling that I had deliberately misled Congress. I think that this feeling can be detected from the excerpts from the transcript containing the question asked by Mr. Lipson, Gerald Ford, and other members of the Committee.

I obviously wish to see this matter handled in a way that is in the best interests of the Administration. I should like very much to have your advice as to how I should proceed. Unfortunately, Mr. McCone has been out of the country and I have been unable to discuss the matter with him.

I first became aware of the problem when Congressman Mahon telephoned me on February 11, 1963. He expressed

considerable

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considerable concern at the attitude that had developed in the Committee and "the manner in which my name was being kicked about." He offered to make available the transcript of the Committee's hearings so that I could get the full sense of the problem, which he described as "very tricky" in view of the fact that "there were only a few people who knew certain things at that time."

I am attaching (TAB C) for your consideration a draft letter which might be appropriate for me to send to the Committee, if you and the President approve. You will note that this letter is in partial conflict with Mr. McCone's testimony, since it recites that the inventory of equipment in Cuba was in fact checked in detail with Mr. McCone over the telephone and that his approval was obtained to its declassification and use before the Committee.

I await your advice.

George W. Ball

Attachments  
As stated

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EXCERPTS FROM UNDER SECRETARY BALL'S  
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE KITCHIN COMMITTEE,  
... OCTOBER 8, 1962 ...

Mr. Ball. Our policy toward Cuba is based upon the assessment that it does not today constitute a military threat to the United States. Without doubt it is an economic burden for the Sino-Soviet bloc. It has value to the bloc primarily as a base for the subversive activities of international communism in the Western Hemisphere.

...

In the last few weeks we have read much in the newspapers of the military buildup of Cuba by the Soviet Union. Quite clearly it does not constitute a threat to the United States.

Since July, when the volume of Soviet military shipments to Cuba suddenly vaulted upward, 85 shiploads arrived in Cuban ports. Many of them carried military items, supplies, and personnel. These shipments have consisted, in part, of types of weapons previously delivered to the Cuban armed forces, including more

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tanks,

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tanks, self-propelled guns, and other ground force equipment. The major tonnage in recent shipments, however, has been devoted to SA-2, surface-to-air missiles (SAMS)--together with all the related gear and equipment necessary for their installation and operation. To date, 15 SAM sites have been established in the island. We estimate the total may eventually reach 25. These are antiaircraft missiles having a slant range of 20 to 25 miles.

In addition, three and possibly four missile sites of a different type have been identified. These sites are similar to known Soviet coastal defense missile sites that are believed to accommodate antishipping missiles with a range of 20 to 35 miles. Quite likely several more such sites will be installed.

Cuba is estimated to have 60 older type Mig jet aircraft. In addition, at least one advanced jet-interceptor is usually equipped with infra-red air-to-air missiles. We estimate that the total of these advanced interceptors

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interceptors in Cuba may eventually reach 25 to 30.

In addition, 16 Komar class guided missile, patrol boats which carry two short-range missiles (11 to 17 miles) were included in recent shipments.

About 4,500 Soviet military specialists have arrived, including construction men and technicians.

....

Mr. Kitchin. In assessing the military threat to the United States, I assume you base that statement, and so has the administration--the executive branch--on the lack of an aggressive and offensive type of base being established in the island of Cuba.

Mr. Ball. That is right. Our information with regard to the availability of armament to Cuba, including the shipments which have been received in the recent buildup, is, we believe, quite complete. Our intelligence is very good and very hard.

All the indications are that this is equipment which is basically of a defensive capability, and that it does not offer any offensive capabilities to Cuba as against the United States or the other nations of the hemisphere.

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Mr. Kitchin. Information has come to my hand--how true or not, and how authentic it is, I will have to rely on your statement--that Cuba has received in recent days some air-breathing type offensive missiles with a range, with a booster effort, of some 130 nautical miles. If that is true, I would certainly think that would be an offensive weapon.

Mr. Ball. That is not what our intelligence shows, Mr. Chairman. I have attempted to give a summary here of the situation based on the intelligence estimates which the intelligence community has made with regard to this.

Mr. Kitchin. So, there is no information in your possession that such an air-breathing type of missile has been received in Cuba?

Mr. Ball. That is correct, sir.

This information is up to date as of yesterday.

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Mr. Lipscomb. Mr. Secretary, you have made a statement on a couple of occasions here that you know that no

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item on the Cocom list is being shipped into Cuba by any  
of the NATO allies.

Mr. Ball. This is our understanding of the facts,  
sir.

Mr. Lipscomb. How can we be so definite in this  
opinion?

Mr. Ball. In the first place, our intelligence with  
respect to Cuba, as I say, is very hard and very good  
and very comprehensive, as a result of the number of  
refugees constantly coming out, and other kinds of  
opportunities that are provided to gain information with  
regard to the Cuban situation.

In the second place, I mentioned to you that the  
Cocom list which was primarily a list designed for in-  
dustrialized economies is not of great direct relevance  
to the Cuban situation because the types of goods it  
contemplates are not the kinds of goods which would be  
of very great benefit to Cuba.

....

Mr. Ritchin.

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Mr. Kitchin. One other question. Is there evidence available at the present time that submarines are escorting these Russian ships coming into the Cuban military buildup I am talking now about the ships which are hauling personnel and military supplies.

Mr. Ball. No, to my knowledge the evidence does not indicate this, Mr. Chairman.

As you know, these ships are kept under the closest surveillance, and we have a system of antisubmarine patrol which I think is quite effective, Mr. Chairman.

. . . .

Mr. Kitchin. Before I get into the 480 program, about which I would like to ask one or two questions, I would like to say I have pretty authentic information which can be produced that there are four SSN-1 missiles in Cuba, the air-breathing type of missile, and at least one is based at Banos, Cuba, just 80 miles from our naval base there.

In view

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In view of your statement made originally and my first question I would appreciate it if you would re-examine the intelligence figures.

Mr. Ball. I think I can clarify that, Mr. Chairman. What I said in my statement was this, on page 11:

In addition three and possibly four missile sites-- This is what you have reference to, I believe-- of a different type have been identified. These sites are similar to known Soviet coastal defense missile sites which are believed to accommodate anti-~~shipping~~ missiles with a range of 20 to 35 miles.

Mr. Kitchin. Then the only difference there which would reflect in your intelligence information and mine is that I have information that these are of a booster type, and when boosted and assisted they have a range of 130 nautical miles. If that can be clarified and without any violation of security we would like to have it done for the record.

Mr. Ball. I would be happy to do so.

(The information requested is as follows:)

CUBAN

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...CUBAN MISSILE SITES...

The evidence we have on the three (possibly four) surface-to-surface missile complexes in Cuba (including the one at Banos) indicates that they are similar to known Soviet coastal defense missile installations and they are capable of firing to a range of 25 to 35 nautical miles.

Up to this point we have no evidence that there are any surface-to-surface missile installations in Cuba capable of firing to a greater range.

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